



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Board of Adjustment

August 4, 2021

CASE No.: BOA21-00596	CASE NAME: Banner Desert Medical Center CSP
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Owner's Name:	Nancy Medrano, Banner Health
Applicant's Name:	Brandon McMillen, SmithCraftSigns, LLC
Location of Request:	Within the 2000 to 2300 blocks of W. Southern Avenue (south side) and within the 1200 to 1600 blocks of S. Dobson Road (west side)
Parcel Nos:	134-43-004B, 134-43-014K, 134-43-006C, 134-43-024C, 134-43-003P, 134-43-022, 134-43-021, 134-43-023, 134-43-014H, 134-43-014M, 134-43-014L, 134-43-014B, 134-43-014F, 134-43-016B, 134-43-017, 134-43-018B, 134-43-016A
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow modifications to an existing Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) in the Neighborhood Commercial District with a Planned Area Development Overlay (NC-PAD).
Zone District:	NC-PAD
Council District:	3
Site size:	71± acres
Staff Planner:	Sean Pesek, Planner I
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **January 4, 1967** the City Council approved the annexation of approximately 399± acres of land, including the subject site, and subsequently rezoned the annexed land to Single Residence (RS-6) and Limited Commercial (LC) to establish a comparable zoning (Ord. No. 538, Case No. Z67-23).

In **January of 1970**, the City Council approved a rezone for the subject site from RS-6 to Multifamily (RM-4) to allow for the development of a medical office campus (Case No. Z70-021).

On **February 4, 1991**, the City Council approved a rezone of the subject site from RM-4 to Neighborhood Commercial with a Development Master Plan Overlay (NC-DMP). This request was to allow the existing medical complex to be brought into conformance with current zoning requirements (Ord. No. 2588, Case No. Z91-001).

On **January 7, 2002**, City Council approved a site plan modification to allow for the expansion of the Desert Medical Hospital Complex (Ord. No. 3962, Case No. Z01-070).

On **May 12, 2009**, the Board of Adjustment approved a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for Banner Desert Hospital (Case No. BA09-016).

On **January 6, 2021**, the Board of Adjustment approved an SUP to modify an existing CSP to establish new sign criteria and design standards (Case No. BOA2-00195).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting is to modify an existing Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for Banner Desert Medical Center to allow for a new wall sign that exceeds the maximum allowable sign area for attached signs and to identify existing wall signs that will be replaced with Banner Health's updated branding.

In 2009, the Banner Desert Medical Center CSP was modified to accommodate the construction of Cardon Children's Medical Center. At that time, the maximum allowable detached and attached sign areas were increased. Banner Health is currently building a new 148,000 square foot Women's Tower that requires a new attached building sign. If approved, the proposed CSP modification will allow for one new attached building sign and the replacement of four existing attached buildings signs. Three of the replacement signs will be in the same location and have a smaller sign area compared to what was previously approved. One replacement sign will have a larger sign area and is noted on the CSP.

Additionally, the applicant identified signs to be refurbished, signs to remain unchanged, and signs to be removed (and not replaced). No additional ground signs will be installed with this modification. Existing ground signs will be updated to include new Banner Health logos.

Table 1: Attached Signs, compares the MZO standards with the proposed CSP. **Bolded** entries denote where the CSP modification exceeds Code.

Table 1: Attached Sign

Sign Standards	Allowed Per MZO	Applicant Proposed CSP
Number of permanent signs - MZO Section 11-43-3(D)	7	1 new wall sign for Women's Tower

Maximum aggregate sign area calculation - MZO Section 11-43-3(D)	500 Square feet	366 square feet
Maximum sign area per sign - MZO Section 11-43-3(D)	160 square feet	366 square feet

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

Per the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the subject site is located in a Specialty District Character Area with a Medical Campus Sub-type. The Specialty District character area is for large areas with a single use such as an educational campus, airport or medical facility. Development in this character type maintains a campus feel and connection between buildings by having consistency in landscaping and signage and a high-quality of building design and materials. The northeastern portion of the property is also located within the Transit District Corridor Sub-type. The Corridor Sub-type applies to the development of corridors between stations and stops. These corridors are less intense than station areas but should still evolve into a more pedestrian-oriented, urban environment.

The site is also located within the Fiesta District and Economic Activity area. Per Chapter 5 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the Fiesta District is primed to revitalize and re-energize over the next decade. Development efforts will focus on the redevelopment and revitalization of retail and entertainment uses to a regional mixed-use activity hub. Redevelopment efforts will focus on the walkability of the district and its connections between the hospital, college, and regional retail development to the surrounding residential development. Various transit options will increase connectivity in this region.

The proposed CSP modification utilizes a color scheme and sign type that promotes a consistent appearance between buildings and will therefore advance the goals and objectives of the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

Site Characteristics:

The subject site is zoned NC-PAD and is located north of the US 60 Superstition Freeway and west of Dobson Road. The proposed CSP modification will apply to several buildings and areas throughout the medical campus.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest City of Tempe Developed Medical	North (Across Southern Ave) LC/NC/OC Commercial	Northeast (Across Southern Ave) LC Commercial
West City of Tempe Developed Medical	Subject Property NC-PAD Developed Medical	East (Across Dobson Road) PS Mesa Community College
Southwest Superstition Freeway	South Superstition Freeway	Southeast Superstition Freeway

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Comprehensive Sign Plan MZO Section 11-46-3(D)

Per Section 11-46-3(D) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall find the following criteria are met for approval of a CSP (including a modification):

1. The development site contains unique or unusual physical conditions, such as topography, proportion, size, or relation to a public street that would limit or restrict normal sign visibility; or

The site is part of a large medical complex with frontage along Dobson Road and Southern Avenue, however, the buildings are setback from the nearest street (Dobson) by over 400 feet which restricts sign visibility for the new Women's Tower.

The request meets this criterion.

2. The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest, or other distinguishing features that represent a clear variation from conventional development; or

The Banner Heath Medical Center encompasses 71 acres of land with over 1,721,000 square feet of total ground floor area. The Women's Tower Expansion project will add five stories to the Cardon Children's Medical Center. Therefore, the subject property exhibits unique characteristics of site location and physical scale that represent a clear variation from conventional development.

The request meets this criterion.

3. The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as lighting, materials, and craftsmanship, murals, or statuary that reinforce or are integrated with the building architecture.

The proposed CSP modification exhibits a unified design theme consistent with the previous modification.

The request meets this criterion.

Special Use Permit MZO Section 11-70-5

Per Section 11-70-5(E) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall also find the following criteria are met for approval of a SUP:

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;

The site is located in a Specialty District Character Area of the Mesa 2040 General Plan which focuses on creating large specialty areas that are connected through similar signage, landscaping and uses. The proposed CSP modification utilizes a color scheme and sign type that promotes a consistent appearance between buildings and will therefore advance the goals and objectives of the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

The proposal meets this criteria.

2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and any other applicable City plan or policies;

The existing medical buildings are a permitted use in the NC zoning district per MZO Chapter 11-6. The proposed CSP allowance for attached signs is consistent with the location, size, design and operating characteristics of the property and the surrounding area.

The proposal meets this criteria.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

The proposed CSP will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.

The proposal meets this criteria.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are existing at the site and are available to serve the proposed project.

The request meets this criterion.

Findings:

- A. If approved, the proposed CSP modification will increase the maximum individual sign area for attached signs in the NC zoning district to allow for the installation of one new wall sign for the Women's Tower.
- B. If approved, the proposed CSP modification will allow Banner Health to replace four existing wall signs; two on the main hospital building and two on the Children's Tower.
- C. No additional ground signs will be installed through approval of the CSP.
- D. Existing ground signs will be updated to include new Banner Health logos (sign face only) and are identified on the CSP.

- E. The proposed CSP modification meets the criteria for a Comprehensive Sign Plan as the subject property contains unique or unusual physical conditions, exhibits unique characteristics of land use, site location and physical scale, and the proposed signage incorporates special design features that are integrated with the building architecture.
- F. The design of the proposed signs will help connect the multi-building development together and help patients find their way in the large medical complex.
- G. The proposed CSP modification will advance the goals and objectives of the General Plan. The proposed attached building sign for the Women's Tower is also consistent with the location, size, design and operating characteristics of the property and will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant mailed the required notification letters to all property owners within 500 feet of the site. As of the date of this report, staff has not been contacted by any resident or property owner to express support or opposition to the request.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the application received and preceding analysis, staff finds the proposed CSP modification conforms to the review criteria for Comprehensive Sign Plans outlined in Section 11-46-3 and the required findings for a Special Use Permit outlined in Section 11-70-5 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

- 1. Compliance with the sign plan and project narrative.
- 2. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
- 3. All signage to be reviewed and approved through a separate permit application.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
Exhibit 2 – Staff Report
Exhibit 3 – Narrative and Justification Statement
Exhibit 4 – Sign Plan